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1605/757

A
TRANSLATION
OF
HORACE's EPISTLE
TO
AUGUSTUS,
IN
IMITATION
OF
Lord ROSCOMMON's Stile
IN THE
ART of POETRY.

Most Humbly Inscib'd and Dedicated,
To His EXCELLENCY

J O H N
Lord CARTERET,
Lord-Lieutenant of IRELAND.

D U B L I N:

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A
TRANSLATION
OF
HORACE'S EPISTLE
TO
AUGUSTUS, &c.



* WHILE You, alone, the Reins of Empire hold,
And scepter'd Princes wait your dread Com-
mands;
While You with Arms defend, with Morals
Grace,

With wholesome Laws reform the *Roman* State:
The Welfare of Mankind, your weighty Charge,
Forbids, Great *Cæsar*, by a long Discourse
To waste your Time, so gloriously employ'd.

Rome's Founder, *Bacchus*, and the famous *Twins*,
By their great Actions rais'd from Men to Gods,
While they taught Arts to cultivate the Earth,
Made Men of Savages by social Laws,

By planting Colonies, and building Towns,
 Complain'd their Merits met with small Returns
 Of Gratitude, and Praise. Even great *Alcides*,
 Whose fated Arm *Hydras* and Tyrants slew,
 Saw Envy own'd no Conqueror, but the Grave.
 For Virtue, in its full Meridian plac'd,
 Hurts the weak Eye, and scorches, while it shines —
 Yet, when it sets, All bless the parting Ray,
 And spread those Laurels on the Hero's Tomb,
 Which, while he liv'd, were to his Brows deny'd.
 But even now, mature, your Honours bloom,
 A Present Deity We all confess,
 Erecting Altars sacred to your || NAME,
 Which rais'd above what Ages past can show,
 To future Times shall live to be ador'd.

(a) But this Your People, just herein, and wise,
 In placing You before the noblest Chiefs,
 That *Greece* or *Rome* e'er saw; in other Things
 Show not so true a Taste; as when they hate,
 And nauseate all that's New,----- for being so —
 Fond of ANTIQUITY to such degree,
 That the (b) *Decemvir's* Laws, the Leagues our Kings,
 With the rough *Sabines*, and the *Gabians* made,
 The (c) *Saws* of *Sibyls*, and the (d) *Pontiff's* Books
 * Are all for sacred ORACLES receiv'd.
 If, since the (e) oldest Writings of the *Greeks*
 Are much the best, the *Romans* must be weigh'd
 In the same Ballance, We may hold our Tongues,
 And swallow the most strange Absurdities.
 ' The Olive has no Stone — the Nut no Shell —
 ' (f) We're at the Height of Arts ---- We paint ---- We sing ----
 ' Nay wrestle better than th' anointed *Greeks* ----

Is

+ Or thus: *Scorn with Surliest Harmony Insur'd.*

Is this the Case — then I would gladly know
 If Poetry, like Wine, by Age refines,
 When are it's Days of full Maturity?
 Suppose a Writer dead one Hundred Years,
 Is he a VETERAN or no? let's fix the Point.
 Well, it's agreed a hundred Years may give
 A Writer due Perfection. Shou'd a Month,
 Or Year be wanting to compleat the Time,
 Where must he stand? among the antient Bards,
 The long confes'd PROPRIETORS of Wit —
 Or in the despicable upstart Class?
 A Month or Year's a trifle, he may claim
 Antiquity with Justice. Then I take
 What's granted, and as if a Horfes tail
 Were pull'd by Hairs insensibly away,
 So less'ning by degrees the given Sum,
 I show their Weakness, who by Annals judge,
 And measure Merit by the length of Time.
 (g) *Ennius* the Wise — the Bold — the second *Homer* —
 (As Critics say) of Glory seems secure,
 With ease fulfilling his inspired Dreams.
 (b) Does not old *Nævius* live, confirm'd by Years,
 Fresh in our Memory? as if his Works
 Were written in our Minds — such vast Respect
 A Poem's venerable Dust demands!
 So, when the mighty ANTIENTS are compar'd,
 All's excellent! th' impartial Critique turns
 Never on Faults — but their distinct Perfections.
 (i) *Pacuvius* then is learn'd, *Accius* sublime,
 ' *Afranius*'s Toga suits *Menander*'s Sock,
 ' *Plautus* still shows a smart and lively Wit
 ' Like that of *Epicharmus*, in *Cæcilius*,
 ' The solemn Stile excells, in *Terence* Art.

These are the Writings taught — these mighty *Rome*
 Throngs to her Theatres to view — these are the Names
 In Vogue from (*k*) *Livy* to the present Time.
 Sometimes the Crowd is right, but often wrong;
 If they implicitly admire, and praise
 The antient Works without the least reserve,
 Thinking them matchless, they are surely wrong.
 But if they'll candidly allow that some
 Wear too antique a Dress, and many more
 Are stiff, and harsh, nay stupidly compos'd,
 Their heads are right, their Judgement I approve.
 Not that I'd have old *Livy's* Works destroy'd —
 (As if I spitefully remember'd all
 The stripes they cost me when a Boy at School)
 But I'm surpris'd they shou'd appear correct,
 Ev'n beautiful, and regularly wrote!
 Where if one graceful Word by chance should rise,
 Or a few sparkling Lines break thro' the Gloom,
 They shall sett off, and recommend the Whole.
 I'm splenetick when I hear People blame
 A Composition, not for being dull,
 Infipid, or the like — but being New —
 And, not content these Sages to excuse,
 Crown them with Praise for things they'd damn in us.
 Shou'd I once doubt that *Atta's* Comic Muse
 Treads gracefully the Stage, all strow'd with Flowers,
 The Senate to a man wou'd cry me down
 As past all shame, for daring to dispute
 What (*l*) *Æsop's* Gravity, and (*l*) *Rosciu's* Skill
 Have represented with such vast Applause.
 This must proceed from Strength of Prejudice
 In favour of their own peculiar Taste,

Or

Or shame to be convinc'd by Men less wise
 In Years — than they, or a concern to see
 The Studies of their youth now worthless deem'd.
 He that seems ravish'd with the (*m*) Martial Song
 Of *Numa* (tho' it's all a Mystery
 To him, as well as me) shews not so much
 His Zeal in favour of the Wits deceas'd,
 As envious Pleasure to detract from us.
 But if the *Greeks* in former days had been
 To Novelty as much averse, as We,
 What Work of theirs cou'd now be old? or how
 Shou'd their Instructions to our hands descend?

(*n*) When *Greece* grew wanton, all her Wars compos'd,
 Her Virtue lost in Luxury, and Ease,
 She various Pleasures hum'rously pursued;
 Now she's delighted with th' Olympic Games,
 And now admiring views the curious Arts,
 Figures that seem to speak, and move in Paint,
 And Rocks enliven'd by the Sculptor's Hand:
 With Rapture now she hears th' instructive Voice
 Of Tragedy, and Musick's pow'rful Charms.
 So a young Girl, the Nurse's Darling, longs
 For every trifle as it passes by,
 But with the present Object sated soon,
 New toys successively raise new desires.

Thus Peace, Prosperity, and love of Change
 In *Greece* variety of Arts produc'd.

At *Rome* (for fickleness as justly fam'd)
 It was the Custom early to receive

The Client, and instruct him in the Laws,
 Money on best Security to lend,
 To hear th' advice of grey Experience,
 And thence extract sage Precepts for their Youth
 How to grow rich, and conquer wild Desires.
 But now a different Humour quite prevails;
 The Town's inspir'd, — by *Phæbus* all possess'd —
 Both Old, and Young with Bays their Temples bind,
 And ev'n at Table entertain in Verse.
 I must confess, when I the Muse disown,
 I lie like any *Parthian*, scarce I wake,
 But Desks, and Pen, and Paper must be brought.
 He that's no Sailor dreads to steer a Ship,
 None, but Physicians, Physick dare prescribe,
 Craftsmen use tools peculiar to their Art,
 But Writing is an Universal Trade —
 And Pens the Instruments of Wits and Fools.
 Yet, that this light delusive Frenzy brings
 Some great Advantages, we must allow.
 The Bard, when seated on the Muse's Hill,
 With scorn looks down on Riches, his gay Soul
 Wrapt up in Harmony — abstract from Cares —
 No Losses can affect, or discompose.
 He lays no Schemes a Friend to undermine,
 Or wrong an Orphan to his care assign'd.
 Content with little frugally he lives,
 And (tho' no Warriour) is of use at Home.
 It's he to graceful Elocution forms
 The stammering tongues of Youth, he shuts their Ears
 'Gainst vile Obscenity, and early sows
 The seeds of Virtue in their tender Minds,
 By Rules, and Discipline subduing all

Those

Those Passions, that disturb the Peace of Man :
 He consecrates to Fame the glorious Acts
 Of all the mighty DEAD, and makes their Lives
 Shining Examples for the Times to come :
 Ev'n in the midst of ills, our Souls confess
 The power of Melody in soothing Cares :
 (o) How shou'd chaste Virgins mix'd with modest Youths
 In Choral Songs address th' immortal Gods
 Without the Aid of sacred POESIE?
 With it's persuasive Numbers wing'd, their Pray'rs
 Ascend, and charm down Blessings on the State,
 The fruitful Rains descend, glad Harvests rise,
 Ev'n Peace, and Health are Gifts we owe the Muse,
 Whose Offerings please the Powers of Heav'n and Hell.

(p) The ancient Hinds, a vigorous, frugal Race,
 Their Corn laid up, and Labours at an end,
 With Sports, and Festivals relax'd their Cares,
 Attended by their Children, Wives, and Slaves,
 Grateful Oblations to the Rural Gods
 Returning, for their Influence on the Year :
Sylvanus Milk, the Earth a Hog receiv'd,
 While Wine, and Garlands crown'd the Genial Bowl
 At these Solemnities the Rustick Farce,
 Full of rough clownish Raillery, began
 In Verse alternate, for a Time it took
 As hum'rous, and diverting, till at length
 Nor Innocence, nor Honour could defend
 Best Families from it's licentious Rage.
 All took th' Alarm, and Many yet unhurt
 Were with a generous Indignation fir'd
 For Virtue's common Cause, until a Law

With strictest Punishment it's Fury curb'd,
And the vile Ribaldry within the Bounds
Of Manners, Sense, and Decency reduc'd.

When captive *Greece* her Conqueror receiv'd
Fierce, and illiterate, she introduc'd
Into rude *Latium* Elegance, and Arts.
So the rough Numbers, us'd since *Saturn's* Days,
The *Grecian* Delicacy melted down
Into a purer, and a smoother Stile ;
Yet not so far refin'd, but some Alloy
Of the old *Barbarism* still remains.
For it was late before the *Romans* form'd
Their MANNER by the noble *Grecian* Taste,
Nor did, till after the first Punic War,
Study with care the useful Sentiments
Contain'd in *Thespis*, and in *Æschylus*,
And the great *Sophocles's* lofty Page.
A generous Emulation spur'd them on
To copy after such Originals,
And by TRANSLATION grace their native Tongue.
Nor did their Genius sink beneath the Task,
As being naturally sublime, and strong,
And greatly form'd for the high Tragic Strain:
But to erase, or use the painful File
Is what a *Roman* Wit cou'd never bear —

(q) As Comedy takes all it's Characters
From common Life, it's thought a Work of ease ;
Whereas the Pains, and Judgment must be great,
Where no Indulgence screens the slightest Fault.
See, with what inconsistency *Plautus* draws

The

The various Humours of his am'rous Youth,
 The wily Pandar, and the thrify Sire!
 What flattern Negligence *Doffemus* shews
 In his loose Stile, and how he tires our Ears
 With the trite Jokes of hungry Parasites!
 But he for Money writ — and (that secur'd)
 Approv'd, or damn'd, was perfectly at ease.
 But he, who writes for Praise, and empty Fame,
 Becomes the Peoples Bubble, swells, or shrinks
 As they are pleas'd to blow; his Spirits move
 By the Town's influence, and fall, or rise,
 Just as the Tide of Hearers ebbs, or flows.
 Farewell the Stage for me — if I must burst
 With Ecstasie, or sink into Despair,
 As a mix'd Multitude shall fix my Doom —

There is another thing which quite distracts
 Th' unhappy Bard, as when (his Play suppress'd)
 The mightier in Number — but in Sense,
 Virtue, and Honour much th' inferior Part
 In spite of Knights, and Senators, demand
 A Bearbeat, or a Prize, those fav'rite Sports —
 Those dear Amusements of a *Roman* Mob —
 But these may be excus'd — when even Men
 Of the first Rank have lost their Taft, and fly
 From Sense, and Wit, to Pageantry, and Show.
 For hours the Scenes are ~~drop~~, while a mad Rout *clor'd*
 Of flying Squadrons cross the Stage, and then
 Kings, bound in Chains, move dolefully along,
 With all the Spoils of War, Ships, Chariots, Arms,
 And captive Cities, with their captive Gods.
 Were now *Democritus* alive, and saw

The elegant Diversions here in vogue,
 Whether an Elephant's enormous Size,
 Or strange mix'd Animals set Crowds agape,
 The many-headed (r) MONSTER wou'd engage
 His curious Speculation, more than all
 The oddest Wonders Nature yet produc'd.
 He'd think, deaf Asses sitting at a Play,
 And braying out their Joy wou'd be a Sight
 Not more ridiculous, than we afford;
 For shou'd an Actor burst his Lungs, what Voice
 Can match the Noise our Theatres resound?
 Like the wild Uproar of the *Tuscan* Waves,
 Or *Garganus*, when Tempests tear his Oaks,
 Are those loud bellowing Shouts the people raise,
 When works of foreign Luxury, and Art
 With Novelty, and Richness strike their Eyes.
 Thus, when a well-drest Player first appears,
 A general Clap receives him; what's the Cause!
 Has he yet spoken — has some noble Thought
 With Grace deliver'd, gain'd this great Applause?
 No — They admire the Beauty of his Robes,
 The fine Embroidery — and the *Tyrian* dye —
 But, not to derogate due praise from those
 Who have succeeded the Dramatic way,
 (Because that kind of writing I decline)
 I fairly own, that Poet seems to shew
 The greatest force of Genius, and of Art,
 Whose pow'rful Images can fill my Soul
 With Terrors, not her own — can Pity raise,
 Or Joy, and soft Complacency diffuse.
 Who, by the wond'rous MAGIC of his Pen,

With

With strong Deception on my Fancy plays,
Now fixes me at *Athens*, now at *Thebes*.

Yet, let the Muse share your propitious Smiles
In some degree, that scorning Pomp and Show,
And the capricious Judgement of a Crowd,
Prefers the Closet to the noisy Stage.
Bid the bold Epic, and the Lyric Strains
Thro' all the Shades of *Helicon* resound,
If you'd enrich your (/) Library with Works
Worthy of *Cæsar*, and the God of Wit.
It's true (to look at home) we're often hurt
By our own Indiscretion, when we break
Into your Hours of Business, or Repose,
When we resent the Freedom of a Friend
For censuring Things, that we our selves admire —
When we unask'd turn back to fav'rite Lines,
Or grieve our finest Touches are not seen,
When we expect to be enrich'd at once,
Sent for by *Cæsar* — and at Court carest —
The instant we assume a Poet's Name.
But it requires a Prince's nicest Taft
To know what Bard, with hallowed Flames inspir'd,
Shou'd offer Praises at fair VIRTUE'S Shrine,
By vulgar Spirits not to be profan'd —
We're told one *Chærilus*, a Dunce much fam'd
For wretched Poetry, — and great Success —
With *Alexander* was in high Esteem.
But Ink with Bards like him serves but to stain
The splendid Acts of Heroes, they would praise —
And yet that very King, whose Bounty flow'd
Upon a worthless Poem, gave Command

D

None


None, but *Apelles*, shou'd in Colours draw
 None, but *Lysippus*, imitate in Brass
 The Conqueror's Face, and bold Majestick Mien.
 So good his Taft in Chiffel-work, and Paint!
 So bad in judging of the Muse's Art!

(t) But your two Fav'rites, by the wisest Choice,
Virgil and *Varius* — immortal Bards!
 Reflect a Glory on their PATRON's Name;
 Whose Royal Gifts to such exalted Worth
 As much his Judgment, as his Bounty shew.
 To make a Hero known, no Canvass can,
 Touch'd by the Pencil into Life, express,
 No mimick Brass, nor breathing Marble shew
 His Person to the World, with such bold Stroaks,
 Such glowing Colours, as a Pen like theirs
 Can paint his Manners, and his Soul display.
 Had I a Genius equally Sublime,
 No reptile Stile should by my humble Choice,
 I'd sing of Castles, built on Mountains, storm'd,
 Of Plains, and Rivers stain'd with hostile Blood,
 Of suppliant Nations, and their captive Kings,
 Of *Parthia* trembling at the *Roman* Name,
 The World made one great PROVINCE by your Arms,
 And Universal Peace restor'd to Man —
 But these are Themes, which to some abler Hand
 My conscious Muse with Blushes must resign,
 While she with silent Admiration knows
 Your MAJESTY admits no vulgar Lay.
 Th' obsequious Fawning of a zealous Fool
 Bespatters those, to whom he'd show his Love,
 And, while he pays his Compliments in Verse,
 Matter for Jest, and Ridicule affords.

I hate

I hate th' Officiouſneſs, that gives me Pain,
And rather chuſe to be unknown, than ſeen
Dawb'd on a Sign-poſt, ill expreſt in Wax,
Or in dull Panegyric be lampoon'd.
I'd bluſh at fulſome Praise, and juſtly fear
My Bard and I, both doom'd to endless Night,
Shou'd for a while be hawk'd about the Streets,
Where Spice, and Odours for the Dead are ſold,
And in ſome Oven be at length inurn'd.

N O T E S.

*  HIS Epistle of *Horace* is juſtly look'd upon, as one of the fineſt Pieces of Antiquity, both for Panegyric and Criticiſm. Nothing can be imagin'd more noble and ſolemn than the Introduction, nor more delicate than the Compliments therein paid to *Cæſar*; whom, tho' he raiſes far above all the Heroes that went before him, yet, in all he ſays, we meet with nothing fulſome, but the whole ſupported by a ſuitable Decency, as well as Grandeur of Thought and Diſtion.

For the Word *Nomen* in the common Editions, Dr. *Bentley*, and others, will have *Numen*. I have comply'd with both readings in this Tranſlation.

(a) *Horace* enters here with the happieſt and eaſieſt Transition in the World, from the Praises of *Augustus* to the main Buſineſs of his Epistle, which is to expoſe and ridicule the vicious Taſt of the People in preferring the ancient *Roman* Writers to the Modern, merely on Account of their Antiquity.

(b) The Laws of the twelve Tables, collected by Ten *Roman* Delegates, from the beſt Inſtitutions of *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, and other Law-givers of *Greece*.

(c) The Credit of theſe Prophecies, chiefly ſubſiſted by their being very old, and very obſcure, and conſequently capable of different Meanings that were conveniently applied as occaſion required.

(d) The *Pontiff's* Books contained the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Roman* Religion, as inſtituted by *Numa*.

(e) Such are the Works of *Homer*, *Heſiod*, *Pindar*, and their famous Dramatic Writers, as *Æſchylus*, *Sophocles*, *Euripides*, &c.

(f) He glances here at the People's perverſe kind of Vanity, who, tho' they cryed down the Poetical Performances of their own Times in Compariſon of the Ancients, yet piqued themſelves on theſe inferior Arts, which they fancied were carried by them to a greater Perfection than ever they were even among the *Græcians*.

(g) He was the beſt of the ancient *Roman* Writers, and was familiar with the elder *Scipio Africanus*, whoſe Exploits he wrote. It has been the common Opinion of Commentators, that *Horace* in this Place ~~ſpeaks~~, and from himſelf cenſures *Ennius*, but I chuſe to follow thoſe who think he ſpeaks here the Opinion of the People, with whom *Ennius* was in great Eſteem, (as all allow he does in giving the ſeveral Characters of the Poets that follow) As for the Words, *Leviter curare videtur*, &c. they naturally enough imply the Security of *Ennius* proceeding from a Confidence, that the Greatneſs of his Genius wou'd enable him to ſupport the Character he undertook, when he affirm'd the Soul of *Homer* paſſ'd into him in a Dream.

(b) He writ on the *Punic War*, besides several Dramatic Pieces.

(i) All these Poets were Dramatic Writers.

(k) *Livius Andronicus*, the first Dramatic Writer among the *Romans*.

(l) Two celebrated Actors at *Rome*.

(m) *Carmen Saliare*; a Hymn sung by the Priests of *Mars*, an Order founded by *Numa*. This was a Piece the *Romans* had in great Veneration, tho' not a Man of them understood a Syllable of it. For People are always apt to imagine, that there must be something more than ordinary in all mystical and very abstruse Writings, especially if they have Antiquity of their Side, as the Gloominess of an ancient Grove renders it more solemn, and usually strikes us with a certain Religious Awe.

(n) *Horace* seems here to have done, with what he first and principally propos'd, which was to ridicule the People's immoderate Prejudice in favour of the ancient Writings; however, tho' he takes a large Compass for the sake of a beautiful variety of Observations, he thereby has the Opportunity of bringing in (among which his Praises of the poetical Profession are most artful and fine) yet we shall find all tending to the same Point; for if after a Succession of several Entertainments, and liberal Arts, Poetry was the last universally encouraged and cultivated, as well in *Greece* as *Rome*; and if it be natural to suppose, that all Arts are somewhat rude at first, and require Time gradually to improve, it follows that Perfection is less to be expected in Works of a very ancient, than those of a later date in the same Nation. But it may be here objected, that the oldest Writings among the *Grecians* are already allow'd to be the best, which seems inconsistent with this Reasoning; the Answer is not difficult, for tho' *Homer*, *Hesiod*, *Pindar*, &c. were in the Time of *Horace*, and perhaps long before, reckon'd the oldest *Greek* Writers, and easily the best in Comparison of that degenerate Race that followed in the Days of Slavery and Oppression; yet it's certain, Poetry long subsisted in *Greece* before *Homer's* Time, and must have been several Years growing up to that Perfection, to which he rais'd it; Nor is it any wonder, that those first rude, and feint Draughts should in time disappear, and give Place to the noble and finish'd Works that were afterwards form'd by that great Example *Homer* show'd the World.

(o) He alludes to the *Carmen Seculare* that was sung every Century, by a Choir of *Patrician* Youths, and Virgins, in Honour of those Gods who were look'd upon as Guardians of the *Roman* Empire, especially *Apollo* and *Diana*, they being the principal Regents of the Year, and its Seasons, the Sun and Moon likewise being suppos'd to have no small Influence over human Affairs. There is a good deal of Art in *Horace's* mentioning this, as one of the Advantages of Poetry, for he himself excell'd in this way of Writing, and compos'd a noble Hymn of this kind, by the Command of *Augustus*, which we have at the End of his *Epodes*.

(p) We have here the first rude Essays of Poetry, especially Dramatic among the *Romans*, which continued in a long State of *Barbarism*, (tho' not altogether in its primitive Grossness) till it was refin'd by the Introduction of the *Græcian* Writings, which were not studied at *Rome* till after the first *Punic War*, but as this Reformation must have been a Work of Time, it was impossible the Productions of that, or even the succeeding Age cou'd be the most perfect Models of fine Writing; which makes directly for our Author's purpose.

(q) *Horace* shews here the Disadvantages the Poets of his Time lay under, who writ for the Stage, and in particular as to Comedy, thro' a prevailing Notion, that this kind of Work requir'd very little Trouble, as having only common Life to copy, but he shews the People their Mistake herein, by letting them see how far even their admir'd *Plautus* and *Terence* were from Perfection in several Instances, he afterwards ridicules in the strongest Manner the People's Stupidity, in preferring Shows, and even the lowest Diversions to the more rational Entertainments of the Drama.

(r) This is a Title *Horace* compliments the People with. *Ep. 1. B. 1. v. 76.*

(s) The new Library built by *Augustus*, on the *Palatine-Hill*, and dedicated to *Apollo*.

(t) Our Author with a Felicity peculiar to himself, joins the Praises of *Augustus* and his two illustrious Poets in one noble Encomium, by making their Glory reciprocal. In the beginning of this Epistle, we see *Augustus* extoll'd above the greatest Chiefs of Antiquity, for all Heroic Virtues: But here to finish the Character, we find a Comparison drawn between him and *Alexander the Great*, in regard to a fine Taste for Letters, much to the Advantage and Honour of *Cæsar*, to whom the Compliment is so much the greater, as this was a tender Point to *Alexander*, and a Knowledge of Books what he piqued himself upon, as we may observe in his Letter to *Aristotle*.

F I N I S.



